# **OVERLAKE DESIGN CHARRETTE**

The City of Redmond conducted a two-day charrette on Friday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, and Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006, at the Silver Cloud Inn in Overlake. The purpose of the charrette was to ask the community to clarify elements of the existing Overlake vision, develop a preliminary preferred concept plan and identify preliminary action program steps. Close to 50 citizens, including people who live or work in the area, business or property managers, and other interested citizens participated. Sponsors included Microsoft Corp., Puget Sound Energy, Nintendo of America, Silver Cloud Inn, Milt's Barbeque in Overlake, and the Greater Redmond Chamber of Commerce.

Charrette participants engaged in a number of hands-on exercises. The purpose and results of each of these exercises are summarized below.

# Visual Preference Survey

The Visual Preference Survey was designed to get the community's gut-level reaction to various types of development. Participants were shown a series of twenty-four pictures and were asked to rank each on a scale of 1 to 5 based on whether or not they liked the image and if they thought it would be an appropriate type of development in Overlake. The results of this exercise are briefly summarized below. A more complete summary, along with the twenty-four pictures used in the survey, is available in Appendix C.

Favorable development elements for most participants included the following:

- Medium-scale residential or office development
- Retail uses, including both small shops and large stores
- High quality materials and design
- Streets designed with a "Main Street" concept, including curb-side parking and retail uses
- A gateway feature
- Variety of parks and open spaces



Figure 8. Mayor Rosemarie Ives addresses participants Friday morning.



Figure 9. Visual preference survey participants.



Figure 10. Favorable development element.



Figure 11. Unfavorable development element.



Figure 12. Presentation of goals and issues map exercise.





Figure 13. Goals and issues maps developed by two of the four groups.

Unfavorable development elements for most participants included the following:

- · Parking lots in front of buildings
- Development that was either too dense or not dense enough
- An unprotected pedestrian environment

# Goals and Issues Map Exercise

The goals and issues map exercise asked participants to identify what was currently working in the area and what could be improved. The exercise included discussion as well as drawing on a base map. The major points identified by all groups are listed below. A summary of two of the group discussions, as well as a large print of each group's map, is available in Appendix D.

- The entire mixed-use core can potentially be redeveloped.
- Intersection safety and the pedestrian environment need to be improved.
- The existing array of local, unique and diverse businesses should be maintained.
- The focal point of the mixed-use core is in the vicinity of the intersection of 152nd Avenue NE and NE 24th Street.
- The trees on the Group Health site should be protected.

# Exploration of Elements

Participants were divided into three groups to focus on four specific elements, including image/character and parks/open space, land use/residential development, and transportation. Each group began with a brief presentation on the topic by one or more resource people. Participants then discussed a series of questions tailored to that element and marked their discussion on a map as appropriate. The major points identified by each group are summarized below. A complete summary of each group's discussion, as well as a large print of each group's map, is available in Appendix E.

#### Image/Character

- Many of the Overlake businesses are ethnically diverse, and this diversity should be marketed.
- A signature development is needed near the area's core, in the vicinity of the intersection of 152nd Avenue NE and NE 24th Street.
- The design of gateways, signage and streetscape features, such as banners and art, should be coordinated within the mixed-use core.
- Overlake's image should be consistent across jurisdictional boundaries.

# Parks/Open Space

- The area needs a connected system of green and open spaces, including a community gathering space.
- Existing trails should be connected.
- Streets in the mixed-use core should be "greened."
- An integrated stormwater treatment/natural amenity should be developed in the southwest sector of the mixed-use core.
- There is opportunity for a park on Group Health's site.

# Land Use/Residential Development

- A wide range and mix of uses is appropriate in the mixed-use core, as well as focal areas in key locations.
- New development should include retail that serves the local neighborhood.
- The mixed-use core needs more public and private amenities, such as a community center, plazas and art.
- Housing needs to appeal to a range of ages and incomes.

#### **Transportation**

- The through-traffic capacity of the arterials should be maintained.
- Local transit service should be maintained and regional transit supported.
- A street network for pedestrians and local traffic should be added.
- · Wide sidewalks and bikeways are needed.



Figure 14. Image/character and parks/open space map.



Figure 15. Presentation of exploration of elements exercise.



Figure 16. Transportation map.



Figure 17. Development experts.



Figure 18. "Soft" group participants.

# Development Expert Forum

At the Development Expert Forum, participants had the opportunity to ask questions of three professionals in the development arena: Suzanne Britsch, Senior Analyst, New Home Trends; Chris Libby, Principal, GGLO Architects; and, Ron Sher, Principal, Metrovation. The major points discussed at the forum are listed below. The complete forum discussion, as well as each panelist's qualifications, is available in Appendix F.

- There is good demand for housing in the mixed-use core.
- It is important to create an image and sense of place that will distinguish Overlake from other locations.
- Redevelopment should take advantage of location and available infrastructure.
- Important design features include variety in building scale, identity and walkability.
- Strong connections to Downtown Redmond, Downtown Bellevue and the Crossroads Center are needed.
- Redmond needs to be clear about its goals for development.
- Transit will make this neighborhood happen.
- Collaborate on identity for the larger area across jurisdictional boundaries.

#### Concept Plan Map Exercise and Synthesis

On day two, participants divided into three groups to develop preliminary concept plans using pre-made land use templates and pictures representing various types of development. A summary of each group's preliminary concept plan is described below.

Following this exercise, a facilitator guided the entire group in a synthesis of the three group plans into one preliminary concept plan. The day ended with a discussion of potential city actions that could make the concept plan happen. Refined versions of the final preliminary concept plan and action steps are described in the next section of this report, titled "Concept Plan."

# "Village Connection" Group

- Two focal points:
  - Park and mixed-use development on the Group Health site
  - · Open space and retail on Sears site
- 152nd as spine: open spaces and mixed-use development, including ground floor retail, housing and offices
- HCT station at south end of 152nd with public spaces and retail
- Expanded local street grid

### "HIP" (High-tech, International Place) Group

- 152nd as a central groovy spine that provides a major gathering place with an international character
- Multiple retail and civic/park space anchors
- System of open space connections
- Aerial HCT on new north/south corridor west of 152nd
- · New street grid system
- Pedestrian and bike connections throughout, including connections to Microsoft

# "Soft" Group

- Recognize unique opportunities in the northern portion of the mixed-use core and encourage master planning
  - · Park, housing and trees on Group Health site
  - Improve 152nd and 31st
  - · Mixed-use on Yett site
  - HCT station on 152nd just north of 24th
  - Pedestrian and bike connections throughout
- Continue to allow a wide range of uses in southwest portion with open space and new local street grid
- Residential and hotel uses in southeast portion with some smaller commercial uses
- Emphasize the area's "soft" image with trees and open space



Figure 19. "Village Connection" concept map.



Figure 20. "HIP" concept map.



Figure 21. "Soft" concept map.